

Andrew Jackson to John Armstrong, November 20, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JOHN ARMSTRONG.1

1 Copy.

Ditto's Landing on the Tennessee River, November 20, 1813.

sir: I have this moment learned by a letter from the governor of Tennessee, that the detachment lately ordered from that State against the creek nation (a part of which detachment I command) have been recognised by the President as the army of the United States. It therefore becomes my duty to communicate henceforth with you, and I shall now briefly acquaint you with the result of the expedition so far as it has progressed.

On the 2nd Inst. having penetrated into the Creek nation, to the Coosa river, I detached Brig. Genl. John Coffee with 900 of the Cavalry and mounted riflemen, to destroy Talushatchee which was situated a few miles on the south of that river, and where I had understood a considerable force of the enemy to be embodied. On the morning of the 3rd this order was executed. The town was burnt, one hundred and Eighty six of the enemy slain (among whom were unfortunately some women and children) and Eighty taken prisoners. Only one warrior escaped. We lost five killed and forty wounded, one of whom has since died.

In the mean time I moved on with the Infantry and that part of the Cavalry and mounted riflemen which had not been detached with Genl. Coffee to the Ten Island, where I

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commend immediate preparations for the erection of a fort, to serve as a deposit for our supplies.

I had received frequent advices that the enemy was embodying in considerable force below us, and on the evening of the 7th a runner arrived from Talladega (a fort of the Friendly party, distant about 30 miles) to give me the information that they had, on that morning encamped within a quarter of a mile of that place, and to entreat that I would hasten to its relief with all practicable dispatch.

Having made the best preparation it was in my power to make, I commenced the line of march at 12 Oclk at night with about 1200 Infantry and 800 horsemen leaving behind me the sick wounded and baggage with what I conceived a Sufficient force to protect them until the arrival of the E Tennessee troops who were hourly expected. On the night of the 8th we incamped within six miles of the enemy, and at sunrise we were within a mile of them. Having formed my men, we marched forward in battle order, and at 8 Oclk the engagement commenced which in a short time, terminate in the entire defeat of the enemy. Two hundred and ninety nine were left dead on the ground, and I have since learned that a considerable number died on their return to their villages. We lost 15 killed and 87 wounded 2 of whom have since died. I am now [*i. e.* , no] eulogist; and cannot do justice to the brave men whom I have the honor to command. The number of the enemy is not precisely known, but Judging from their fiers, the share of ground they occupied and their own representation, it cannot have been less than a thousand.

The Creek war could now have been terminated in a few weeks, had I not been compelled by the want of supplies and for the protection of my rear, to hasten back to my late incampment. compelled by the emergency I had set out with only one days ration (which indeed was all we had) and I had learned on my march that the East Tennessee troops had entirely changed their rout. The cause of this strange departure from the arrangement I had previously concerted with the commander of those troops have since been fully explained.

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On our return to the Ten Island whare we expected to meet a plentiful supply of provision, we found those whom we had left there in the same starveing condition with our selves. This painfull disapointment produced an embarrassment in the camp which was not easily rectified. I was compelled to send back the greater part of my men to a Depot which I had establis[h]ed on the Tennessee that they might there receive supplies which the contractors had neglected to forward on, and to return hither myself (whare I arrived this evening) for the purpose of seeing that effectual measures be taken for our future supplies. In the morning I shall see the contractors and, hope to be able to return immediately afterwards to the Ten Islands. It will be some weeks however before I shall be able to recommence my operations beyond the Coose, and then I shall prosecute the campaign with the utmost vigor.

2On the morning of the 17th (the day on which I left the ten Island) I receivd a flag from the Hillabies soliciting peace upon any terms I might think proper to grant it to which I replied, that they would be required to restore all the prisoners and property, they had taken from the whits or the friendly Creeks, to deliver up the murderers of our citizens and the instigaters of the war, who might still remain amongst them and on our arival in their vicinity to unite their forces with ours (if that should be then required) in the prosecution of the war against those who might still hold out. From the same source I learn that the enemy in the neighbouring towns, thrown into consternation by the late engagement are abandoning their war camps, and flying in every direction.

2 In the "Letters Received" in the War Dept., vol. 84, p. 240, appears the portion of this letter that begins with this paragraph. There is nothing to show why the first part was not copied into the record.

The letters by which I receivd this information I have forwarded to Govr Blount and by him they will be transmitted to you.

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The East Tennessee troops are still in the cherokee nation, and I have receivd no late intelligence from the Georgia troop. I have taken such measures as I thought the best to procure a cooperation, but I have not succeeded in getting even any direct information from the Commanders of those forces. The last and indeed the only certain account I have had of them was by a letter from the Governor of that State forwarded by my return express about a month ago and that informed me that the advance was then at fort Hawkin[s].³ I believe however the blow is struck which will render our want of concert a matter of no material consequence with the forces now under my command. I hope to be able to attain the object of the expidition in a short time.

I have the honor to be with great respect yr. obt sert

3 Now Hawkinsville, Ga.